

## ASQUITH FAILS TO AVERT BRITISH COAL STRIKE

Slenderest Hope Entertained of  
Supreme Effort To Be Made  
by Sir G. Asquith.

### FIRM FOR MINIMUM WAGE

Government Exhausts All Means,  
Save Special Legislation, to  
Avert Shutting Down  
of Mines.

(By Cable to The Tribune.)  
London, Feb. 28.—The government tonight in an official communication admits its failure to avert off a national coal strike. The negotiations will be continued to-morrow, but the outlook can only be described as very gloomy.

The government, however, has a plan for the settlement of the controversy. The plan is Sir George Asquith's, with an addendum by Mr. Lloyd George. So much is fairly certain, despite the secrecy with which the negotiations have been conducted in Downing Street with the coal owners and miners and the Miners' Federation. It is a laborious attempt on the part of the noted strike settler to find a line of least resistance between both sides and to discover conditions under which the principle of the minimum wage can be accepted by the mine owners.

Mr. Lloyd George is credited with proposing an amendment by which capitalists can receive a guarantee that they will not suffer loss from the proposed settlement, but it is open to question whether the Prime Minister has accepted governmental responsibility for financing the minimum wage.

### A Dangerous Precedent.

While the railway corporations were allowed to increase their traffic charges by way of practical compensation for their enlarged expenditure, it would be a dangerous precedent for ministers to saddle upon the Treasury an obligation to make good the defaults caused by the adoption of the strikers' demands.

The Prime Minister, it is now understood, has followed the requirements of the Conciliation act and advocated with persuasive eloquence the impending strike. There has been no menace of dragging the miners by compulsory methods, nor has there been any suggestion of revolution from above by the companies and mining operations conducted by the government on the basis of the minimum wage.

The Prime Minister, however, does not require a mentor to warn him that partisan opposition would turn and rend him were any such drastic measures adopted.

The passage of a minimum wage bill may have been hinted at, and certainly Mr. Asquith, as an astute lawyer, can be depended upon to legalize by act of Parliament whatever is done outside the conciliation act.

### Deadlock Almost Complete.

Meanwhile, the deadlock is almost complete. It had been supposed that the greatest hostility would arise from the Welsh mine owners, and public opinion was veering in favor of the miners, who, it was thought, would be satisfied with the concession of the principle of a minimum wage, leaving the adjustment of the details to subsequent arbitration or negotiation. It is now seen that the miners themselves are placing the greatest obstacle in the way of a peaceful solution by insisting upon their own interpretation of the terms of the minimum wage.

At the same time it is felt that the government's efforts have not been wasted. The government has secured the assent of 60 per cent of the mine owners of the country to a minimum wage principle, thus greatly facilitating its task should it be deemed advisable to resort to legislative enforcement thereof. According to opinion in the lobbies of Parliament to-night this will be the next step, should Sir George Asquith fail in the supreme effort to be made to-morrow.

At midnight the government issued an official statement on the subject, breaking the rule of secrecy which it has heretofore rigidly observed during the course of the negotiations.

The statement begins by declaring that the government is satisfied that there are cases in which underground workers are not able to earn a reasonable minimum wage. The government is further satisfied that the power to earn such wage should be secured by arrangements suitable to the special circumstances in each district, adequate safeguards being provided to protect employers against abuse.

### Divided Councils Among Owners.

The government is prepared to confer with the parties concerned as to the best method of giving practical effect to these conclusions by means of district conferences, a representative appointed by the government being present in event of failure to arrive at a settlement within a reasonable time, and representatives appointed by the government to decide jointly any outstanding points. These proposals, continues the statement, were considered by the representatives of the coal owners this afternoon, with the result that those in the federated area, which includes Yorkshire, Lancashire, the Midlands and North Wales, accepted, adding that it is expected that the government will make such arrangements as would secure that the agreement be binding on both sides for a reasonable time.

This statement does not show much progress toward a settlement, and neither the proposal that there should be a minimum wage, with adequate safeguards for the owners, nor that concerning district conferences has met anything like general acceptance.

Most English owners have agreed to

the proposal, but it has been rejected by the Northumbrian, Scottish and South Welsh masters, as well as by smaller owners in Somersetshire and Gloucestershire.

### The Men Stand Firm.

The miners categorically refuse a settlement unless the principle of the minimum wage is accepted by all owners. The National Miners' Federation replied to the proposals by adopting the following resolution:

There can be no settlement of the present dispute unless the principle of an individual minimum wage for all underground workers is agreed to by the coal owners.

The federation added that it was willing to meet the coal owners at any time to discuss minimum rates to be adopted in each district. In response to questions by the Prime Minister the miners' executive said they could enter into conferences with the government in respect to the establishment of a minimum wage in the various districts only on the understanding that this be fixed at the rate adopted by the Miners' Federation on February 2.

The minimum rates for the different districts as adopted by the federation vary from 7s 6d to 10s 10d, no underground worker to receive less than 7s 6d.

To this the Prime Minister replied that such an arrangement was impossible without the discussion and negotiation between the parties proposed by the government to determine the amount of the minimum wage suitable to each district.

At the request of the Prime Minister representatives of both parties agreed to be available for further consultation to-morrow morning.

Thus ends the official statement, but it is evident that the situation offers hardly the remotest chance of reaching a settlement in time to avert a national coal strike.

The conference of the Miners' Federation passed a resolution to-day to permit all the men whose services are necessary to keep the coal pits in good working order to continue at work.

Premier Asquith had an audience of King George at Buckingham Palace at 5:30 o'clock this evening to inform him of the situation.

There is some talk of the intention of the crown to purchase some of the collieries in Wales so that henceforth it will be impossible to jeopardize the navy's supply of Welsh coal.

A meeting of the cabinet has been called for to-morrow, and it is expected that an important statement concerning the situation will be made to Parliament.

By to-morrow night almost a million miners will have ceased work. The best authorities, however, are strongly of the opinion that the strike will be of short duration.

ANTI-SUFFRAGIST CAMPAIGN

British Cabinet Ministers at Great Albert Hall Meeting.

London, Feb. 28.—An anti-suffragist campaign was launched to-night by a mass meeting at Albert Hall, which was packed to the doors. The presence of a great number of prominent persons in various walks of life attested to the existence of a weighty opposition to the enfranchisement of women.

Lord Cromer, former British Agent and Consul General in Egypt, presided, while among those on the platform were the Duke of Norfolk and a large number of members of the House of Commons of both parties. Lord Cromer, Lord Curzon and the Right Hon. Lewis Harcourt, Secretary of State for the Colonies, made speeches, and a resolution was adopted declaring that the enfranchisement of women would be detrimental to their interests and the welfare of the state, and ought not to take place except it was demanded by a majority of the electorate.

A letter from Premier Asquith was read, in which he said that he believed, as always, that the granting of Parliamentary suffrage to women "would be a grave political mistake."

FACES CAPITAL CHARGE

American Caught in Mexico Accused of Being a Spy.

San Diego, Cal., Feb. 28.—George Lebrasky, an American, is to be tried by a Mexican military court at Tijuana, Lower California, to-morrow morning on a charge of being a spy and a former rebel. It found guilty death will be the penalty.

Lebrasky was arrested with a party of tourists at Tijuana Monday morning and has been held incommunicado. He succeeded in getting a letter past the sentries to-day and news of his plight was brought to San Diego. Lebrasky is twenty-one years old, says he is innocent of the charge and can prove the fact if his captors will give him the opportunity.

Denial of Dannemora Warden.

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Brandt never had an explanation of why Brandt's name was added to the list. The District Attorney will now try to get Mr. Collins to go before the grand jury and tell why he ordered Brandt transferred to Dannemora.

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Representatives of the Illinois Surety Company, which bonded Brandt, made an attempt to learn who was behind Brandt, but Mirabeau L. Towns, his attorney, refused to give any answer to the query. Brandt was taken over from the Tombs, evidently anticipating his release, for he carried a suitcase and a bag.

A few minutes later Brandt walked out of the Lafayette street door of the Criminal Courts Building, out of custody for the first time since March 11, 1907. Between the door and the taxi cab which Mr. Towns had waiting for him, Brandt faced a battery of cameras and a crowd of curious ones. He grinned broadly, then sobered up and dove into the taxi cab with apparent relief. He was closely shaven and neatly dressed in blue clothing, with a gray overcoat, and looked entirely unlike what one would expect as to a man who had just finished a five-year term in prison.

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